Ballad of the landlord : Langston Hughes

Summary:
The poem "Ballad of the Landlord" is a beautiful composed by Langston Hughes. The poem powerfully raises a strong voice against colour discrimination in America. The poet has shown real social conflict between the white and the black.
There is a leak on the roof of the house. The landlord has already been told about it. The steps have been broken down. But when the landlord comes up, he does not fall down. To repair the house the landlord asks for ten dollars. But before the landlord repairs the house, he will have got more than that. When the landlord get expulsion orders from the court to expel the tenant and throw his furniture in the street? But he talks about high moral standards. If the tenant land his fist on him, he will not be able to say a word. Then the landlord will told the police and get the man arrested, saying that the man is challenging the law and police station and kept into a small room in the jail. The next day there will be the headlines in papers: Man threatens landlord; Tenant had no money; Negro is sentenced ninety days' imprisonment.

Application of Four Levels

1. Literal Comprehension:

This poem is a ballad which shows the racial discrimination in America between the whites and the blacks. The writer is a negro tenant living in the house of cruel white landlord. The house is in the poor condition but the landlord asks for expensive rent. The tenant complains about the leaking roof and broken steps. He wonders way the landlord does not fall while coming up. The landlord ignores the complaint. He forces the tenant to pay the rent plus ten bucks (dollar) that he owes. The tenant refuses to pay the money until the house is repaired. Then the landlord threatens the tenant by saying that he will get eviction orders, he will throw the furniture in the street, kick him out, cut off heat and so on. The tenant claims that is no justice and he can't do all that. The landlord gets more angry. he calls the police to arrest negro tenant. H even threatens threatens to blame him as a treasoner. The negro tenant is very much afraid. He imagines that the police comes whistling, with patrol bell and arrest him. He thinks he will be taken into the iron cell and he will be rotten there. In the papers there will be big news with black head lines, "Man threatens Landlord, Tenant held no bail, judge gives negro ninety days in country jail".

2. Interpretation:

In this poem "Ballad of the Landlord" the black American poet Langston Hughes has presented the realistic picture of the racial discrimination between the blacks and the whites in the U.S.A. The powerful poem can be taken as an indictment (anger) of colour discrimination in America. The title of the poem is very ironical. It tells the story of the foolishness and insensitivity of the landlord. The landlord of the poem is a representative of white race and tenant represents the black community. Thus, the poem can be taken as a protest of blacks against the whites. The protest and the irony are mainly directed to mock at the racial and communal equality in America. The poem advocates that racial discrimination and other inequalities between whites and blacks should be removed. The poem shows that even the magazines and laws are not in favour of blacks as the tenant imagines that he will be arrested by police and kept in the jail as the punishment for his threatening to the landlord.

In this way, poem appeals for the rights and freedom of black people. Inhuman behaviour to tenant shows that people regard other people as no people. Thus, to bring equality among all the people that is rich or poor, black or white, capable or incapable, haves or have not etc. is the central theme of the poem.

3. Critical Thinking:

Though the poem presents the domination, suppression, and exploitation of black people by whites yet some ideas presented in the poem are less convincing. Are we ready to accept so easily the existence of such social injustice in a highly democratic country? Are the police and court so biased? Do the press support the landlord instead of the tenant?

4. Assimilation:

In my neighbourhood, most Brahmins are conservative. They create a lot of difficulties. I took a room on rent after a good labour. There was good facility of water. Neighbours often came to fill their pots. One morning I awake early. I was brushing my teeth. A lady came, and set the pipe in her pot. By chance, the pipe was touched by me. she shouted at me as if I were an animal. I had very bitter experience of the event. The caste feeling has socially dominated the people of my country.

Chandalika | kullabs.com

Learning Simplified 6-8 minutes

Chandalika : Rabindranath Tagore

Summary:

Scene I:

Mother seeks Prakriti. Prakriti is by the well in the blistering sun. Mother wonders at the reply of her daughter that she is doing penance for someone who has set echoing words in her heart. Not of tha same caste, but of the same kind (human beings). The man has said to her "Give me water". Her caste 'Chandal' has not changed the merit of water for him. She has her new birth after tyhe arrival of a Buddhist monk. He drank water from her hand, and gave a new birth. Mother warns her that she will have to pay a price for this madness. Prakriti insists thathe came to her well instead of many others along the way. He has recognized her better than mother. Prakriti wants him. He will raise the truth, he will take flower from the dust, and take it to his bosom. Mother still gives warning. She says that the filth into which an evil fate has cast Prakriti is a wall of mud that no spade in the world can break through. Prakriti sings yearning the touch of his feet. Mother realizes the meaning of her worship. She recollects the event in which the king's son had forgotten everything in her beauty. Prakriti replies that he wanted to hunt her as a beast to bind in chains of gold. But the monk was different for whom she is ready to sacrifice herself and lay like a basket of flowers at his feet. mother believes that it's the writ of destiny that she is born slave. Prakriti counteracts by saying it is not good to delude herself wit the selfhumiliation - it is false, and a sin.

Mother accepts her defeat, and is ready to call him by all means. But Prakriti will send her call into his soul, for him to hear. She persuades her mother to cast her spells to drag him to her. Prakriti respects him who respects her. A religion that insults is a false religion. His name is Ananda, the disciple of the Lord Buddha. Mother is afraid of the very name, and warns again. Meanwhile, they hear men in yellow robes chanting. Ananda is ahead of them all. Prakriti becomes very excited and hysteric to call him back. Mother prepares everything for the chant. She thinks that the fire will hurt him unbearably. Prakriti claims that nothing will hurt him because he is not a common man.

Scene II (fifteen days have passed):

While looking in the mirror, she feels that her heart will break. She cannot bear the horrible agony. Mother is about to undo the spell. Yet Prakriti, finding that the end of the path is so near, does not let her do so. She thinks that she will blot out all his suffering, emptying her whole world at his feet. She sings that she will bathe his hurt. It is Ashad, and their four months' fast is hand. He is in Vaishali, and is being driven back by mother's powerful spells. In the mirror, first day, she saw a mist covering the whole sky, then fire. The second day, she saw a deep black cloud with lightning. All his limbs fenced with flame. Later, light was gone. His eyes were fixed motionless upon the distance, eyes grew red. Finally, his anger turned upon himself. Prakriti believes that he can attain Mukti when she attains her own. Last time, when she saw, he had passed secretly through the lion-gate of Vaishali. He walked across rivers and on difficult mountain, and along the dark forest paths at dead of night. All the conflict with his own soul was at the end. The previous night he came at Patal village on the river Upali. He gave a sudden start and stood still there, for it was a place where the Lord Buddha preached to king Suprabhas. Because of the fear that the dream-spell might break, she flung away the mirror. Since then, she has not seen it again.

Being ready as insecured by her mother Prakriti dances and sings. She does not look in the mirror again. If he reveals himself, she will see him before her. Mother compels her to look, and when she looks in the mirror, she flings it away asking her mother to stop. She does not find any light, radiance or shining purity or the heavenly glow. Bearing his self's defeat as a heavy burden he comes with drooping head. It is an insult to the heroic. She speaks to forgive her, and wishes victory to him. Mother ends her life at his feet. Ananda prays to Lord Buddha for mercy.

Application of Four Levels:

1. Literal Comprehension:

Prakriti, a girl of the untouchable caste falls in love wit the Buddha's ascetic disciple Ananda who came to her well to ask some water from her hand. His honour of her as a human being makes her feel that is her new birth. She says that she is unable to live without him and persuades her mother to cast a magic

spell on him. Seeing her daughter's suffering, her mother becomes ready to bind him with her spell although she knows that what she is doing is wrong. She has to work very hard for a long time risking her life. Finally, her spell wins and Ananda is seen at her house overcome by shame. Ananda prays to Buddha, who breaks the magic spell and saves them from committing sin.

2. Interpretation:

The play is not about the lust of a young woman but it also projects the idea of human dignity and fraternity. The woman's humanity goes beyond caste and is awakened when the monk enters as the hero whose "light and radiance, shining purity, and heavenly glow aroused her womanhood and she begs the monk's forgiveness. She is redeemed by her understanding and remorse as Ananda chants his homage to Buddha. Tagore has projected the idea of human dignity through the feeling of Prakriti how she was suppressed by the social chain and injustice before, and how she has realized that she is human. A person who respects other human beings is truly a human.

3. Critical Thinking:

If we the modern readers read the play not as a legend but as a story of the real event, we find many things unacceptable in it. Ananda's treatment with Prakriti is praiseworthy. Prakriti's longing for him is quite natural. But is it possible to do magic spells on a person? Can the scene of the distance seen on the magic mirror? Does a person die if she has to undo the magic spell?

4. Assimilation:

By reading this play I myself have felt a changed person. Although I belong to the low caste I have learned to respect myself because self-humiliation is worse than a self-murder. I want to be recognized myself as a human being not as a person who is insulted all the time for no fault of his. In the river of Ananda's holy teaching I would like to cast my caste.

Eight O' Clock | kullabs.com

Learning Simplified 4-5 minutes

Eight O' Clock : A.E. Housman

Summary:

The poem "Eight O' Clock" is alliterative and rhythmic which has dramatic plot was composed by A.E Housman. The poem deals with the continous powerful time and inevitable death.

The protagonist (main character) stood and heard the bell of the church tower. In the morning the bell was heard all over the town and it reminded the people of their task and pushed them out. After every fifteen minutes the clock hit bell- one, two, three, four. An unpleasant event was about to happen. The hour was quite near against his desire. He stood and counted the quarter strike. It was four. Therefore, he cursed his luck because he could do nothing to protect himself from the unhappy thing. Then, the clock collected all its strength and struck eight.

Application of Four Levels

1. Literal Comprehension:

The speaker of the poem stood by the church tower and heard the ticking sound of the clock. In every quarter, the ticking sound spread over the morning town and woke up the people. Not only the speaker but all the people are routined by time. The speaker counted his time and cursed his luck. The clock of the tower collected its strength and gave final struck to the speaker.

2. Interpretation:

In this poem, the protagonist shows the helplessness of all creatures in front of powerful death and time. Time is eternal and death is inevitable. But our life is momentary and mortal. No one can live forever. Everyone of us should die sooner or later. In every moment, our life is becoming shorter and weaker. The time is always striking us. When it gives the final struck, we have to leave this world. The protagonist may also be trying to tell us that we should be punctual and utilize our time properly. May be the poet of this poem is in a great critical and serious situation because he could not utilize his time properly. So, we all should be able to perform our duty and responsibility within our time limitation. The poet may also be trying to convey the message that poor, needy, helpless and old people are always ignored by the busy modern people. Everybody are busy in their own selfish private life and works. Lastly,the poet may be suggesting to live our this short life meaningfully being conscious of the limitation of time and without being worried of death.

3. Critical thinking:

Like a musical composition, this poem has used a beautiful repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of the words. For example we find the repetition of 'st' sound in the first line and 'str' in the last line. The final word 'struck' is a serious pun, that is, an amusing use of word with two meanings. The first meaning of the word 'struck' is to inform the time by the hitting of the bell and its second meaning is to hit the protagonist forcefully. However some ideas presented in the poem are convincing. How can be the protagonist deal with the dark side of life only? If the protagonist knows the time is limited and death is inevitable,why should he curse his luck? Why didn't the protagonist make any effort or attempt to solve his problem or change his bad time rather than just counting his time aid waiting for his death? Why didn't the writer made us clear about the identity of the main character?

4. Assimilation:

The poem has made me aware of the value of limited time. For mortal human beings, time is brief. Time and tides wait for no one.Time is ever moving and it is chewing in every moment with its powerful teeth. Thus, i have determined to utilize every moment to make short life meaningful.

Metaphors | kullabs.com

Learning Simplified 5-6 minutes

Metaphors : Sylvia Plath

Summary:

The poem "Metaphor", is a nine-syllable nine lines poem, beautifully composed by Slyvia Plath. It describes the nine months of gestation of the speaker.

The speaker is a pregnant. She feels herself a walking riddle because she does not know what person (a boy or a girl) she is carrying. She is waiting for a solution. Because of the baby inside, she looks like an elephant or a big house. Her body is large and rounded, so when she walks slowly. She looks like a melon as well as her legs look like two tendrils. She addresses the unborn baby. She calls it a red fruit growing round and full like plum or an apple. It seems as precious as ivory. It is fine-timbered in sinew and bone like a well-built horse. It is getting and developing larger like a loaf. The baby is like a fat purse. The speaker feels her helplessness as she is only a means or a stage. She is like a pregnant cow. During her pregnancy she has fulfilled her desire to eat sour things by eating a bag of green apples. The passenger (the baby) has got into the train but she does not know when it will get off. So she is surprised.

Application of Four Levels

1. Literal Comprehension:

The pregnant speaker feels herself like an unsolved question because she does not know the sex of the unborn baby. Her body is big and rounded like an elephant , a big house or a melon. The growing baby inside is valuable like ivory and well built. It is like a newly minted coin inside her. She feels that she is helpless like a pregnant cow because she is only a means. She has eaten a green apples to satisfy her desire to eat something sour. The baby is inside but she does not know when it comes out.

2. Interpretation:

The nine-syllable nine lines what we find in this poem are remarkably symbolic meaning of nine-months pregnancy. Each line is of nine syllables: I’mriddleinninesyllables, and the whole poem has nine lines. But these are indication of nine months of gestation. All metaphors, what we find in this poem such as elephant-body, ponderous house-slow and awkward weighty body etc. relate to herself or to her pregnancy. It is certainly very humorous and self-mocking poem with disturbed state of mind for what she is going to bear after nine months or her nine-syllable nine lines poem.

Sylvia Plath, the great exponent of the poetry of neurosis, has presented this poem with deep psychological treatment. As per poetry is generally notable for its controlled and intense treatment of extremely painful states of mind, this present poem "Metaphors" is equally important for metaphorical theme of the poet's pregnancy. She has thought of the resemblances that lie between both these poem and baby. Physically and mentally both are in her, and she has been herself a walking riddle, passing a question that awaits solution, what person is she carrying? In other words, she thinks of the poem, what poem is she going to produce? She has shown inter-connection between the fixed cycle of pregnancy and the poetic form the nine-syllable nine lines.

3. Critical Thinking:

Though this poem successfully describes the condition of a pregnant woman, yet some ideas presented

in the poem are less convincing. Irrespective of the time when this poem was composed, nowadays the modern technology has enabled us to disclose gender of the baby inside the womb. In addition, she has overlooked the exceptional cases of pregnancy like giving birth to baby in more or less than nine months. The speaker is not clear about the number of children she had given birth to. Is this her first time pregnancy or she is already used to it? Is she a single mother?
Comparing the unborn baby with loaf and dough (money) is inhuman. The latter of these two comparisons reveal the intention of the speaker behind giving birth to the baby, that is, he or she will support her financially in the future. Besides, if she is unhappy with being pregnant, it's her own error. She should have thought of it in advance or before sex. It will have been better if she has used contraceptive while having intercourse with to-be-daddy of to-be-born baby. Still after the conception, she can get abortion, provided that is legal to have one. So, technically this poem seems to be anachronous. Plath seems to concentrate on the symptoms and things that happened to her during the pregnancy rather than the fact that she is bringing another life into the world.
4. Assimilation:
By reading this poem I knew a great deal about the pregnant woman. Her desire to eat something sour is common all over the world. When I read this poem I can see a pregnant woman in my mind. I also knew how helpless she feels because she cannot do anything with his inevitable thing. She feels herself like a means, who is used to satisfy somebody else's desire.

My Papa's Waltz | kullabs.com

Learning Simplified 4-5 minutes

My Papa's Waltz : Theodore Roethke

Summary:
"My Papa's Waltz" is a beautiful poem composed by Theodore Roethke. In this poem he presents his memories of his father. When the narrator was young, he would dance around with his father. He would put his feet on top of his father's breath. It had an unpleasant feeling of loss of balance. But he would continue with great determination in spite of hardships. Such dancing to a waltz was not easy. They would play noisily and roughly with a lot of jumping and running. Then the pans would fall down from the kitchen shelf and the mother would be annoyed. During dancing the father would hold the boy's wrist with his hand which was damaged on one finger joint. When the father skipped his step, the buckle of his belt would hurt the boy's right ear. He would beat time on the boy's head with his dirty and hard palm and took him to bed, but the boy still held on to his father's shirt.
Application of Four Levels:
1. Literal Comprehension:
The poet's father came home having whiskey. The smell on his breath could make a small boy dizzy, but the poet hung on him like death to be waltzing. They played together until the pans from the kitchen shelf slid down. It was enough to make his mother angry. Father's hand that held his wrist was battered on one knuckle. His right ear also rubbed on buckle. Father beat him on his head with his hard hand and took him to bed dancing. The poet kept on clinging to his shirt.
2. Interpretation:
In this poem the poet presents his memories of his father. He also presents his father as a source of love and affection. His father is probably no longer in his world. Thus, nostalgia is the central theme of the poem. In the poem the poet presents the importance of fatherly love in the life of human beings. No pain, no gain, no diamond and jewels can worth more than the love and affection which we receive from our father. In the poem the poet also tolerated bitter smell of whiskey, dirty hands of his father because he loved his father and he had friendly behaviour with the father. Not only that, when the poet played with his father,the poet got physical pain from his father. But also the poet remember his past days with his father and those days very lovely and valuable. The poem also presents the childhood life as a joyful life among all the stages of life. The memories of child life are very joyful, lovely and valuable for everyone of us. Thus, the poet often like to remember his past days with his father. Time passes but it evokes experience that remains continued in mind and heart. Perhaps he died not like his mother very much but he adored his father.
3. Critical Thinking:
Roetheke's "My Papa's Waltz" is a memoir poem. The four quatrains of the poem are well-constructed

and the poem is beautiful and rhythmic. However, some ideas presented in the poem are less convincing. Does a small boy cling, to his drunkard father without being afraid? When the father hurts and beats the boy, why doesn't he cry? Does the mother really bear everything? Do the mothers really remain silent when one's child get beaten and injured by father or somebody else? Does the father play in the kitchen with his child like a child? Does the father not clean his palm even if he is a drinker?

4. Assimilation:

I have some sweet and unforgetful moments of joy in my life that I passed with my mother. Mother helped me to pay fees in school by saving from daily expenditure. Father never desired to provide me any education more than the basic one. She loved and inspired me to be a highly educated person. Her words still reverberate in my mind, and that has been source of my guidance.

Sorry, Wrong Number | kullabs.com

Learning Simplified 6-8 minutes

Sorry, Wrong Number : Lucille Fletcher

Summary:

"Sorry, Wrong Number" is a beautiful play written by Lucille Fletcher. Mrs. Stevenson is dialing Murray Hill 3-0093, but there is always a busy signal. Being tired, she dials the operator, and he sets the line. Her husband is in office working late that night. She is all alone in the house. She is very nervous. The receiver is picked up at the other end. By chance, she hears two men talking in the line. First man gives instruction to George. George knows the address. The first man explains that the private patrolman goes around to the bar on second Avenue for a beer. He says to be sure that all the lights downstairs are out. There should be only one light visible from the street. At eleven-fifteen a subway train crosses the bridge. It makes noise, in case her window is open and she should scream.

That is enough for Mrs. Stevenson to understand that they are dealing a business of murder. The first man delivers the message of their client that it should look like a simple robbery. Querulous, selfcentered neurotic, stick, bed-tied (for 12 years) Mrs. Stevenson is very nervous at the news of forthcoming murder of some poor innocent woman. She tries to dial the same number again but there is busy signal. She asks the chief operator to trace the call. All that is in vain. She informs policeman sergeant Duffy about the case. Duffy is also unable to help because of lack of any clue. Second Avenue is a large long street. There are many bridges in New York. It might have been a long distance call overheard by her. These are so many difficulties that no one can help. Meanwhile, there comes some ringing sound in her phone, but no one speaks when she picks it up. She is irritated. After some time, the third man delivers her telegram saying that Mr. Stevenson is leaving for Boston at 11 p.m. that night. She is extremely upset. she dials an information of a hospital with a request to send a nurse for companionship to calm her nerves. But that is not available. During her talk with the Fourth man in information, someone picks up the extension line downstairs. In her excitement, she dials the operator, and he sets line with the policeman sergeant Duffy. Phone rings. She screams, but it sinks in the sound of a subway train. Duffy picks up receiver. George says in phone "Sorry, Wrong Number". Receiver is hung up.

Application of Four Levels

1. Literal Comprehension:

Mrs. Stevenson had been invalid for twelve years. Mr. Stevenson has always been on her bed side and served her. But that was her maid's night off and her husband had been working late in his office. She had been trying to contact him herself for the last forty-five minutes. But she grew impatient and asked the operator to try it for her. The telephone rang three times and the receiver was picked up at the other end. Mrs. Stevenson heard two males speaking without responding her. The first man told the second man George to kill woman with a knife and to take away the jewellery so that it would like simple robbery. The woman lived on Second Avenue near a bridge. Mrs. Stevenson was nervous and she dialled the operator again to find the call which she heard by chance over the telephone. She asked him to find out the wrong number which he could not find. She was extremely nervous and sought the help of the chief operator. He replied that it was possible to find out only the live call, not the disconnected one. She then telephoned the police. She felt that it was her civic duty to save the innocent woman. But the police took no interest in her. Sergeant Duffy said that her clue was not enough to find out the murderer. He added that if she felt that her life was in danger they could do something for her. She replied that she was safe.

She was growing restless. Just then she got the telegram message through the phone that Mr. Stevenson had to go to Boston on an urgent job and that he would be back the following afternoon. She was more afraid. She felt that she would be killed. She phoned a hospital to send a trained nurse to be with her because her condition was extremely bad. The hospital promised to send one. But she grew more terrified and phoned the police. Just then a subway train crossed the bridge. George came in and killed her. The phone rang. Sergeant Duffy was speaking. George replied him that he was sorry because it was the wrong number.

2. Interpretation:

This play might be a commentary on life in faceless, fragmented, modern American cities. When people are busy they have no time to take care of other people. Even their invalid relatives become a burden to them. They become brutal and get them killed. Murder there is so common that we can get professional killers easily. When his wife is found useless and a burden, Mr. Stevenson does not hesitate to hire a murderer. People are inhuman and mechanical in big cities. It has also presented the life of the busy people in the city. When the overwork makes the policeman tired, he is not interested in his duty. The hospital has no trained nurses send to the sick person. Life is so busy that one does not have enough time to take interest in other people's affairs.

3. Critical Thinking:

This play shows that if the script is well-written a single actress can hold the spellbound attention of the audience. It is a thriller. Its exciting and gripping plot calls the undivided attention of the readers. When we read it we don't agree with some of the things in the play. We want to ask a few questions: Is this a realistic play? Is it possible for a caller to overhear a conversation between two others parties? Is it possible for Mrs. Stevenson never fully to grasp that she is the intended victim? But on the whole it is a very artistic play.

4. Assimilation:

By reading this play I came to know why murder is so common in big cities. To get rid of the unwanted things one gets another killed. it also gave me a glimpse of busy life in big cities. Even the policeman is so busy that he is not so much interested in the report of the would-be murder. The hospital has no trained nurses to send. the husband has to leave his invalid wife because of his work. Only the jobless person is free and he is suffering from nervousness.

Sorry, Wrong Number | kullabs.com

Learning Simplified 6-8 minutes

Sorry, Wrong Number : Lucille Fletcher

Summary:

"Sorry, Wrong Number" is a beautiful play written by Lucille Fletcher. Mrs. Stevenson is dialing Murray Hill 3-0093, but there is always a busy signal. Being tired, she dials the operator, and he sets the line. Her husband is in office working late that night. She is all alone in the house. She is very nervous. The receiver is picked up at the other end. By chance, she hears two men talking in the line. First man gives instruction to George. George knows the address. The first man explains that the private patrolman goes around to the bar on second Avenue for a beer. He says to be sure that all the lights downstairs are out. There should be only one light visible from the street. At eleven-fifteen a subway train crosses the bridge. It makes noise, in case her window is open and she should scream.

That is enough for Mrs. Stevenson to understand that they are dealing a business of murder. The first man delivers the message of their client that it should look like a simple robbery. Querulous, selfcentered neurotic, stick, bed-tied (for 12 years) Mrs. Stevenson is very nervous at the news of forthcoming murder of some poor innocent woman. She tries to dial the same number again but there is busy signal. She asks the chief operator to trace the call. All that is in vain. She informs policeman sergeant Duffy about the case. Duffy is also unable to help because of lack of any clue. Second Avenue is a large long street. There are many bridges in New York. It might have been a long distance call overheard by her. These are so many difficulties that no one can help. Meanwhile, there comes some ringing sound in her phone, but no one speaks when she picks it up. She is irritated. After some time, the third man delivers her telegram saying that Mr. Stevenson is leaving for Boston at 11 p.m. that night. She is extremely upset. she dials an information of a hospital with a request to send a nurse for companionship to calm her nerves. But that is not available. During her talk with the Fourth man in

information, someone picks up the extension line downstairs. In her excitement, she dials the operator, and he sets line with the policeman sergeant Duffy. Phone rings. She screams, but it sinks in the sound of a subway train. Duffy picks up receiver. George says in phone "Sorry, Wrong Number". Receiver is hung up.

Application of Four Levels

1. Literal Comprehension:

Mrs. Stevenson had been invalid for twelve years. Mr. Stevenson has always been on her bed side and served her. But that was her maid's night off and her husband had been working late in his office. She had been trying to contact him herself for the last forty-five minutes. But she grew impatient and asked the operator to try it for her. The telephone rang three times and the receiver was picked up at the other end. Mrs. Stevenson heard two males speaking without responding her. The first man told the second man George to kill woman with a knife and to take away the jewellery so that it would like simple robbery. The woman lived on Second Avenue near a bridge. Mrs. Stevenson was nervous and she dialled the operator again to find the call which she heard by chance over the telephone. She asked him to find out the wrong number which he could not find. She was extremely nervous and sought the help of the chief operator. He replied that it was possible to find out only the live call, not the disconnected one. She then telephoned the police. She felt that it was her civic duty to save the innocent woman. But the police took no interest in her. Sergeant Duffy said that her clue was not enough to find out the murderer. He added that if she felt that her life was in danger they could do something for her. She replied that she was safe. She was growing restless. Just then she got the telegram message through the phone that Mr. Stevenson had to go to Boston on an urgent job and that he would be back the following afternoon. She was more afraid. She felt that she would be killed. She phoned a hospital to send a trained nurse to be with her because her condition was extremely bad. The hospital promised to send one. But she grew more terrified and phoned the police. Just then a subway train crossed the bridge. George came in and killed her. The phone rang. Sergeant Duffy was speaking. George replied him that he was sorry because it was the wrong number.

2. Interpretation:

This play might be a commentary on life in faceless, fragmented, modern American cities. When people are busy they have no time to take care of other people. Even their invalid relatives become a burden to them. They become brutal and get them killed. Murder there is so common that we can get professional killers easily. When his wife is found useless and a burden, Mr. Stevenson does not hesitate to hire a murderer. People are inhuman and mechanical in big cities. It has also presented the life of the busy people in the city. When the overwork makes the policeman tired, he is not interested in his duty. The hospital has no trained nurses send to the sick person. Life is so busy that one does not have enough time to take interest in other people's affairs.

3. Critical Thinking:

This play shows that if the script is well-written a single actress can hold the spellbound attention of the audience. It is a thriller. Its exciting and gripping plot calls the undivided attention of the readers. When we read it we don't agree with some of the things in the play. We want to ask a few questions: Is this a realistic play? Is it possible for a caller to overhear a conversation between two others parties? Is it possible for Mrs. Stevenson never fully to grasp that she is the intended victim? But on the whole it is a very artistic play.

4. Assimilation:

By reading this play I came to know why murder is so common in big cities. To get rid of the unwanted things one gets another killed. it also gave me a glimpse of busy life in big cities. Even the policeman is so busy that he is not so much interested in the report of the would-be murder. The hospital has no trained nurses to send. the husband has to leave his invalid wife because of his work. Only the jobless person is free and he is suffering from nervousness.

The Buddha | kullabs.com

Learning Simplified 6-8 minutes

The Buddha : Elizabeth Coatsworth

Summary:

"The Buddha" is a beautiful story written by Elizabeth Coatsworth. Once, an artist decided to paint the

picture of the Buddha,s life and death. He wanted to make it very lively, beautiful and long distance because he was going to hang it on in the village temple. He hoped that even his great grand children might see it. So, he thought deeply and imagined himself to be prince Siddhartha. He imagined his room as the big beautiful chamber of prince Siddhartha. He also imagined the garden and compound of him as of the Siddhartha's. His room was cleaned and made spotless.

The first day, he sat on a clean mat and before him was a beautiful image of the Buddha. Good fortune, the cat sat beside him. He tried to concentrate. Then, he felt very happy and excited. He imagined of Siddhartha's skill of using bow and arrow riding horse winning Yasodhara among the applause (big clap). He also imagined his midday meal as the rarest food of the prince. When good fortune entered, he imagined a beautiful dancing girl come to entertain the prince, walking in golden sandals. He imagined all these things on first day.

On the second day also the room was made so clean as first day. The artist sat before the image of the Buddha. He imagined of Siddhartha's renunciation. He imagined of seeing an old man, a sick man, a dead man and he also imagined Siddhartha's leaving his wife and son. He imagined of going to the jungle walking without shoes, bagging for his food and seeking his wisdom. At last, he imagined of sitting under a big tree and starting meditation. He also imagined of Buddha's getting enlightment. He took his housekeeper and the cat as his first disciples. When the cat refused to hear his divine words, he cursed the cat that the door of heaven is not open for him.

The third day, the earliest decided to the Buddha's real dead. For this, he slept for twenty-four hours as if he were dead. When he woke up, he called hurriedly for bushes, ink, spring water and a roll of silk. Then he began to paint the picture of the dead Buddha. Although he had to think for three days, he painted the picture in less than three hours.

Application of Four Levels

1. Literal Comprehension:

The artist had to paint a picture of the death of Buddha to be hung in the village temple. To do this he had to understand the Buddha. On the first day he imagined himself to be young prince, Siddhartha, living in the palace. He went and won the princess Yashodhara in a competition. He had no bad feeling against his rivals. The artist felt that a line of servants were serving his food when his housekeeper came with his midday meal. He imagined his cat, good fortune, to be a dancing girl. On the second day, he became Siddhartha, who renounced everything seeing an old man, a sick and a dead man. Feeling powerless, he wanted to know the cause of the suffering. At night he left his wife and son and went secretly out of his father's kingdom. The prince's pain made the artist tired the next morning. On the third day, he imagined to be Siddhartha sitting under a bo tree. Being unmoved by temptation, he got a great wisdom. He loved every living thing including the rocks as his own wife or son. He wandered here and there making disciples and carrying happiness. Now he was eighty and was about to die. The artist looked for the cat and remembered that the cat was not allowed to go to heaven because it had paid no homage to the Buddha. He felt sad for the cat. Knowing all this about the Buddha, he slept for twentyfour hours. After this, in less than three hours, he painted the picture of the Buddha dying peacefully on the couch.

2. Interpretation:

Through this story, the writer may be trying to tell us that before doing anything, we must strive to understand the subject fully, otherwise, we may not be successful. Pre-plan, mental preparation and devotion leads towards success. Thus, to achieve success in any field or work deep concentration, observation and hard labour is required. Through this story, the writer may also be trying to convey the message about the life and death of human beings. Death is inevitable and it doesn't discriminate rich and poor. No living creatures know when, where and how death comes to them. When death strikes us we all look helpless. But no lively creatures likes to die, they all struggle hard to live. No one likes to sacrifice anything that gives him a lot of pleasure. Thus, as this story is about Buddha, the writer also wants to spread the message of Buddha about life, death, peace and satisfaction. One should be contented with whatever he has. Peace requires self-satisfaction. In the absence of self-satisfaction, all people suffers and they are never happy. Love the world instead of 'self'. This can help to overcome even the 'terror' of death. Death is a suffering to those who are in grip of worldly pleasures, and it is peace to those who have given up such pleasures.

3. Critical Thinking:

Though the story is informative and it teaches us a lot of teachings of Buddha about life and death of people, yet the some ideas presented in the story are less convincing. Is it possible for a man to sleep

for twenty four hours pretending as if he were dead? We the modern readers doubt if there are gods, devils or the heaven. The Buddha had a love for every living thing, why was the cat refused to go into the heaven? Was he so selfish that he needed homage from others? Is love concerned with a give-andtake
business?

4. Assimilation:

Elizabeth Coatsworth's story "The Buddha" gave me new method and inspiration. The story taught me to understand something fully and realistically before we point or create or write about any subject matter. One day, I had to write an essay on "Beggars" for an international essay competition. I am rich and well educated person. I spent my childhood among various facilities and comforts. I felt the lack of nothing, while studying in campus level, all my demands were fulfilled by my parents. I got no chance to understand poverty, suffering, pain and difficulties. I decided to realize the miserable life of beggars. Thus, I left Kathmandu and went to Bhairahawa. I disguised myself to look like a sage and begged for two days. I wandered door to door. Some people called me lazy man, some scolded with bad words and some let their dogs to chase me. Finally, I understand well what begging is like? I wrote realistic essay which won the award.

The Hitch-Hiker | kullabs.com

Learning Simplified 7-9 minutes

The Hitch-Hiker : Roald Dahl

Summary:

"The Hitch-Hiker" is a beautiful story written by Roald Dahl. The writer had a new expensive car. It had a top speed of 129 m.p.h. He was driving up to London by himself. Ahead of him he saw a man thumbing a lift. He stopped for the hitch-hiker. He hated those who did not stop for the hitch-hikers. When the man got into the car, the writer asked him what part of London he was going to. The man replied that he was going to Epsom for the races. The writer was surprised to know that the man never bet on horses and that he did not help to work the betting machines, either. The writer said that being a writer he was taking interest in his affairs. The man said that writing a book was a skilled trade, that he was in skilled trade, too, and that he despised those who spent all their lives doing worthless routine jobs with no skill in them at all. He added that the secret of life was to become very very good at something that was very very hard to do.

The writer's new car made the man guess that he was successful writer. Then he challenged that she could not go at speed of 129 m.p.h. as claimed by the car-maker. After this the writer put his foot down on the accelerator. After sometime she was running at the speed of 120 m.p.h. then they suddenly heard the siren of the police and a policeman stopped the car and asked if he was taking someone to hospital or if his house was on fire. When the writer said that no such thing had happened, the policeman asked for his driving license and noted down the writer's name and address in his book of tickets. After filling in the details he tore out the true copy of the ticket and gave it to the writer. Producing a notebook from his pocket, he also wrote down the passenger's name and address. The policeman was a suspicious of him. He warned that both of them would have to be brought to court. He got on his motorbike and roared off.

The writer wanted to go to his socilitor in London to talk about this case. He asked the man why he had told a lie about his job and why he had told the policeman that he was an unemployed hod carrier. He had already said that he was in a skilled trade. Then the writer noticed the man rolling a cigarette very fast. His fingers were quicker and cleverer than those of the best piano player in the world. To the man playing the piano was very easy. He said that not one person in ten million could do what he did. Suddenly the man showed the writer's belt which he had unbuckled very cleverly. He showed the the writer's shoelace which he had taken out. He produced one thing after another which belonged to the writer and which he had taken without his notice. This surprised the writer. When the writer told him that he was a pick-pocket, he did not like the word. He said that he was a fingersmith, one who was expert with his fingers. He added that after the race he would take the winner's money. He claimed that only pickpockets were caught, not fingersmiths, adding that if the writer had had false teeth he would have taken them out of his mouth without being caught by him. He produced the policeman's books and said that the policeman could do nothing against them because his memory was very weak. The writer

praised him very much and he was very pleased.

Application of Four Levels

1. Literal Comprehension:

As the writer was driving up to London in hi new car, a hitch-hiker asked for a lift. When he got into the car he said that he was in a skilled trade. Because of the new car, he guessed that he must have been a successful writer. He encouraged the writer to drive the car at the speed of 129 m.p.h. as claimed by the car maker. When the car was running at 120 m.p.h. a policeman stopped the car and wrote down the writer's name and address and other details in a book of tickets. He also wrote down the passenger's name and address and warned that they would have to go to court. After the policeman had roared off, the hitch-hiker rolled a cigarette very fast. This made the writer curious. He proved that he was a skilled workman by showing the writer's belt, shoelace and many other things. He did not like to be called a pickpocket, but a fingersmith. He puzzled the writer by showing policeman's note-book and ticket-book. They were safe.

2. Interpretation:

The story may be trying to tell us that practical knowledge is the best knowledge. Knowledge which is gained through real experience of life are supposed to be far better than bookish knowledge. The writer also focuses on the truth of life, that is the secret of life is to become very very good at something that's very very hard to do. Any knowledge gets its maturity when it passes through real situations of life. In the story, though hitch-hiker was illiterate by nature he was good man. He is absolutely fair in dealing. He picks the pocket of winners in races and of the rich and he also returns the things of the narrator. This also shows that even uneducated people can distinguish between good and bad and take corrective action when the situation demands. The story may be also trying to convey the message that we should be bold, courageous and confident while dealing with the situation which is not in favour of ours. The story also presents the proudness and carelessness of educated person. The way the writer spoke with the policeman and his dealing in critical situation presents irrationality of educated people. On the other hand it presents bravery of experienced and people in a critical situation in the form of hitch-hiker.

3. Critical Thinking:

The story is really interesting and informative, but some ideas presented in the story are less convincing. The story is about a peculiar, strange fingersmith. In reality do we find such peculiar fingersmith? How is it possible for any pick-pocketer to steal note-books from the front pocket of policeman? Do educated people like narrator talk in such a irrational way with policeman? How can educated people like narrator praise and motivate the criminal act of hitch-hiker instead of helping the policeman to catch him? Do educated and professional people like narrator over speed his car just to win the challenge of hitch-hiker without caring its consequences and ignoring traffic rules? I also don't believe in what the hitch-hiker did. Is it possible to take off one's belt without being noticed by the wearer? Taking money out of one's pocket in the crowded place is one thing but taking off the things one is wearing is entirely a different matter.

4. Assimilation:

I will try to follow what the hitch-hiker said. I will try to learn something very difficult to do. Only then I think I can live comfortably. But I will not do what he has done. In my opinion he is not entirely bad. He takes only the winner's money. He does not cheat the loser or the poor person. But my conscience does not allow me to rob anyone. The narrator really believes that the hitch-hiker is a fantastic fellow, because he had not only taken his belongings but saved both of them from trouble by taking the policeman's notebook
and ticket-book.

The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner

Learning Simplified 4-5 minutes

The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner is a short cynical modern poem composed by Alden Nowlan. This poem is directly an experience a poet had while writing it.

The poet was composing a love poem. His wife gets into his room and disturbs him. The writer has to stop writing to glance at her. He may have been writing about his love and affection towards his wife,

but when she herself appears before him, the poet doesn't like her appearance. It is self-contradictory in the life of an imaginative and creative artist. His wife interrupts his meditative mood. As a result of her lively and active appearance, he has to stop his writing. The sequence of imagination and emotion gets lost at once. The loss of imagination and emotion causes the loss of the poem itself. The result is that he begin to curse her.

Application of Four Levels

1. Literal Comprehension:

The poet was sitting in his room. He was writing a poem. He was deeply lost in his writing. He was writing a poem about his love for his wife. At that time his wife entered suddenly into the room. Her arrival disturbed his writing. He forgets what he was writing. So, he was angry with her. But he wasn't able to express his anger openly. He silently cursed her.

2. Interpretation:

In this single-sentenced poem, the poet may be trying to tell us that creativity needs silence and peaceful environment. Any creativity requires deep concentration and thinking. So, a creative person must not be interrupted during his imagination.Any new idea, new thought or any type of innovation can be generated only with the peaceful mind. The poem suggests us that we should not interrupt or disturb the creative person and we should also try to maintain the silence and peaceful environment for their deep concentration. The poem also tells us that he/she must be left in peaceful surrounding so that he can run long distance in his loneliness, that is, he/she can make images in his/her imagination.

The poem also reveals the male love for women. As the poet was in his loneliness, and deep thinking he imagined about his wife and was writing a poem for his wife. This shows the passion, affection, love, emotions and deep feeling of man towards women. On the other side, the poet might also be trying to tell us that all human beings are selfish. They love other people for their own sake, not for the sake of loved ones. The poet loved his poems, not his wife. That is why he was angry with her. He lost his poem, she was abused silently. The poet wanted to make himself immortal by writing a beautiful poem about his wife. When she disturbed him in doing so, he was angry.

3. Critical Thinking:

Though the poem is informative and tells us that creativity requires peaceful environment, some ideas presented in the poem are less convincing. The poem is about real experience of poet, but how can real experience be forgotten within a moment? How can poet curse his wife about whom he was describing his love? Are the words sufficient to describe the way we love our beloved ones? The poet wants to be immortal. He wants to preserve his name for a long time. Instead of loving his wife, he loves her in poems only. So he writes love poems about her. In the race of his life, the poet feels that he is lonely. His wife does not support him. Does her bursting into the writing suggest that she does not like his writing?

4. Assimilation:

When I read this poem I came to know why my wife does not like my reading all the time. When I read a love poem or a love story, identified myself and my wife with the main characters. Then I would enjoy loving her. But she did not understand this love of mine for her. Now I know what she needs is real love, not my imaginary love.

The Lottery | kullabs.com

Learning Simplified 5-7 minutes

The Lottery : Shirley Jackson

Summary:

"The Lottery" is a beautiful story written by Shirley Jackson. The lottery was going to be conducted in the square of the village. All people were gathering there. Elderly people were talking about their farms and farm-works. Children were talking and playing.Bobby Martin filled her pockets with stones. And other children also followed her. They made a great pile of stones in one corner.

Mr. Summers arrived with a blank wooden box to start the lottery. Behind him was Mr. Graves with a stool. The box was kept on the stool. Mr. Summers stirred up slips of paper of the box. Many parts of the ritual had been forgotten. Recital, salute, addressing to people all had been forgotten. He used slips of paper instead chips of wood. Old Man Warner was a devout to the ritual. He called all of them crazy who wanted to give it up. He was blind supporter of the superstition that "Lottery in June, corn be heavy

soon." Mr. and Mrs. Adams were in favour of removal of the ritual. Mrs. Hutchinson was also against the ritual. After call, heads of all families went to draw slips of papers. Mr. Hutchinson was unfortunately lucky to find a paper with a black spot on it. Thereafter, the Hutchinsons both had to draw slips, but Mrs. Hutchinson forced that her children also should be allowed in participation. Her whole family, five members, went ahead and drew the lottery. The youngest one was saved, as they unfolded the slip and it had no black spot. Other two children opened, but they were also escaped. According to the law of probability, one of the parents was to be sacrificed, and it was Mrs. Hutchinson who was cruelly killed. People threw stones on her. She died with a terrifying sound.

Application of Four Levels

1. Literal Comprehension:

On the morning of June 27 of a recent year, the 300 villagers of an American village prepare for the yearly lottery in a mood of excitement. The tradition of the lottery is so old that some of its ritual has been left behind and some has been reshaped. Its basic purpose is entirely unremembered, but residents are present to take part in it. The civic-minded Mr. Summers has been sworn in and then he hands a piece of paper to the head of each family. When it is discovered the Hutchingson family has drawn the marked slip, each member of the family - Tessie, the children, and Bill is given another slip. Silence prevails as suspense hovers over the proceedings. After helplessly protesting the injustice of the first drawing, Tessie finds that she holds the marked slip. Set in a clear space, hopelessly afraid, she feels the first pebbles hitting her as people, holding stones, push forward , "and then they were upon her." The winner is stoned to death by her fellow townsmen.

2. Interpretation:

The fundamental theory of the story by the writer is that " ignorance, hypocrisy and prejudice are a curse to human beings." People never can eliminate their primitive instincts at all. Barbarism, wildness, cruelty, inhumanity, irrationality are always with a human inwardly. Outwardly he likes to speak in rhetorical tone, that they have much more development in their living, but inwardly they have been still savage. There is unbelievable difference in their speaking and doing. A society has many superstitions which, despite the lack of reasons and truth, they have not been able to rescue themselves. They have fear, but they hide. They suffer themselves, and they make others suffer, too.

The story might be trying to tell us that decent human beings in a civilized Western community are capable of something as monstrous as this lottery. Outwardly man live in an age of post-office, bank or tractor, but this innermost nature is the same as in primitive age. That is why Nancy and Billy laugh when they escape the death, even though they know that their escape means the sure death of either their father or mother. Somebody is made a scapegoat, and killed for no reason at all.

3. Critical Thinking:

After reading the story many questions came into my mind: Why is the winner of the lottery stoned to death? Why did Tessie want to include Don and Eva in the Hutchingsons? Why do people say that the event is unfair when the result is against them? Why do people ask others to accept the defeat whereas the same persons can't accept it when it is their turn? Why do people not like to change the most harmful side of the ritual whereas they like to change other ritual? Is man basically a savage?

4. Assimilation:

When I read this story, I understood myself and the society better. I realized that man is selfish by nature If I were asked to choose between the life of mine and that of mine and that of my parent. I would certainly choose mine. I identified my mother with Tessie. She keeps on working for the family, but other members of the family want to her to work more. She is blamed and made responsible for no fault of hers Our society has been changing continuously. We have given up those things which we think are inconvenient for us. But we don't think about others. We force others to observe the tradition blindly. We are all hypocrites.